

Five pandemic issues that higher ed should be talking about right now but aren't

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COVID-19 impact on US higher education system

CNBC

Layoffs and lawsuits: Colleges resort to last-ditch efforts to stay afloat

The majority of all faculty members are now in non-tenured or ... before the Covid-19 crisis, years of cuts in state funding caused college tuition ...

4 weeks ago



The New York Times

As the Virus Deepens Financial Trouble, Colleges Turn to Layoffs

LAKEWOOD, Ohio — Hammered by mounting coronavirus costs and ... "Rarely do full-time faculty get laid off, especially tenured faculty."

1 month ago



The Guardian

Outrage as coronavirus prompts US universities and colleges to shed staff

Mass layoffs and job cuts in further and higher education are being met with protests and lawsuits across the country. About 2,800 adjunct ...

5 days ago



The New York Times

As Colleges Move Classes Online, Families Rebel Against the Cost

... students and their parents are demanding tuition rebates, increased financial aid, reduced fees and leaves of absences to compensate for ...

2 days ago



USA TODAY

'The virus beat us': Colleges are increasingly going online for fall 2020 semester as COVID-19 cases rise

'The virus beat us': Colleges are increasingly going online for fall 2020 ... College, will prohibit students who live in states on the New York ...

3 weeks ago



US

Los Angeles Times

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LIFESTYLE



For college students, taking a gap year might be the best way to outwit coronavirus

1. What impact does delaying or deferring higher education enrollment have on completion?



INVEST IN YOU: READY. SET. GROW.

No gap year after all — students opt to stay in school, lender Sallie Mae finds

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At Harvard, other elite colleges, more students deferring their first year

By Laura Krantz and Deirdre Fernandes Globe Staff, Updated August 6, 2020, 7:21 p.m.

    58



At Harvard and other colleges in the region, more students than typical have decided to delay their first year. JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

Facing perhaps the most uncertain year of college life in recent history, droves of first-year students at top-tier schools are choosing to defer their admission for a year.

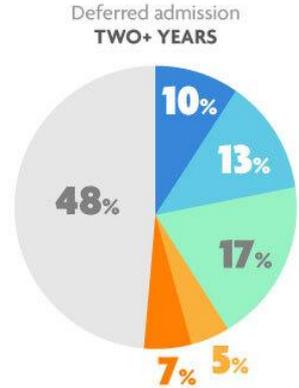
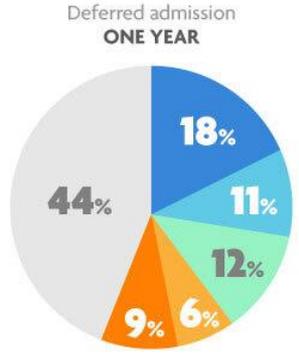
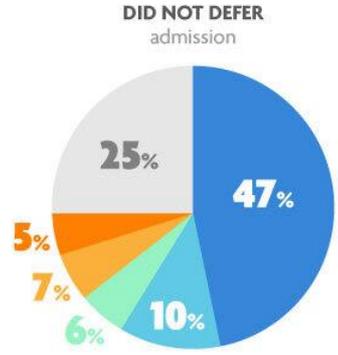
Twenty percent of Harvard first-year students are opting to defer their admission, the school announced Thursday, as students decide to take a gap year rather than start their elite education online amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. What impact does delaying or deferring higher education enrollment have on completion?

Are students who defer admission more or less likely to finish?

Attainment or level of last institution enrolled through June 2017 by Delayed enrollment into PSE: number of years 2011-12

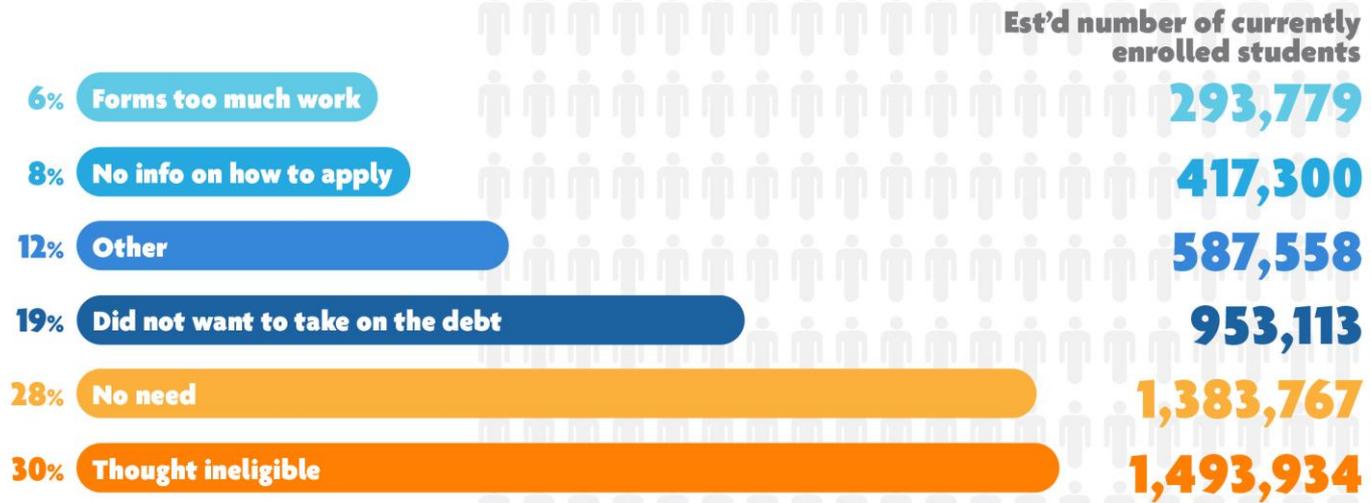
- Bachelor's
- Associate's
- Certificate
- No Degree (enrolled at 4-year)
- No Degree (enrolled at less-than-4-year)
- No Degree (not enrolled)



U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2012/17 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:12/17)

2. How hard it is for students and families to figure out the best way to finance college in normal times?

Why Undergraduates Say They Don't Apply For Federal Financial Aid



U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019 Digest of Education Statistics (Table 303.70) and 2015-16 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:16)

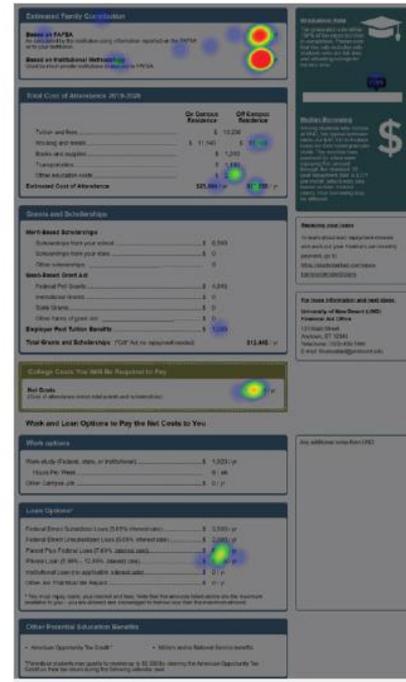
2. How hard it is for students and families to figure out the best way to finance college in normal times?

Distribution of student and parent WORD CONFUSION

by area of the award letter template and type of confusion reported

“ I don't understand what it means. ” “ I don't understand why I need to know it. ” “ It is too vague. ”

	“ I don't understand what it means. ”	“ I don't understand why I need to know it. ”	“ It is too vague. ”
EFC_WC_Block	39.7%	28.4%	30.6%
COA_WC_Block	6.1%	13.1%	20.0%
GS_WC_Block	7.8%	9.3%	8.1%
NetCosts_WC_Block	6.4%	9.3%	11.0%
WorkOpts_WC_Block	3.0%	4.7%	2.9%
LoanOpts_WC_Block	14.3%	11.0%	5.8%
Other_WC_Block	5.3%	2.1%	3.9%
Glossary_WC_Block	5.0%	5.1%	4.5%
Info_WC_Block	12.5%	16.9%	13.2%
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	n=658	n=236	n=310



What Financial AID EXPERT RESPONDENTS predicted students would find confusing



What STUDENT RESPONDENTS indicated confusion with regarding how a number was calculated

2. How hard it is for students and families to figure out the best way to finance college in normal times?

■ Was the actual amount you had to pay to attend Institution X:

Institution Type

	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	UNSURE
Higher than what you expected	35%	53%	49%
About what you expected	57%	42%	47%
Lower than what you expected	8%	5%	5%

2. How hard it is for students and families to figure out the best way to finance college in normal times?

■ Was the actual amount you had to pay to attend Institution X:

Reported amount borrowed in student loans

	<\$10,000	\$10,001 - \$20,000	\$20,001 - \$50,000	\$50,001+
Higher than what you expected	35%	47%	61%	68%
About what you expected	57%	48%	36%	32%
Lower than what you expected	8%	5%	3%	

3. What will happen to borrowing if millions of students don't travel to college towns and campuses?

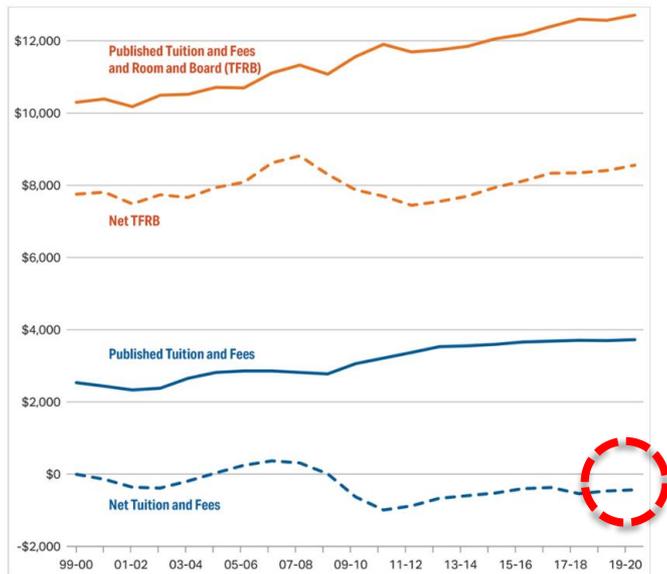
Figure 9: Average Published and Net Prices in 2019 Dollars, Full-Time In-State Undergraduate Students at Public Four-Year Institutions, 1999-00 to 2019-20

[Download Data in Excel](#)



Figure 8: Average Published and Net Prices in 2019 Dollars, Full-Time In-District Undergraduate Students at Public Two-Year Institutions, 1999-00 to 2019-20

[Download Data in Excel](#)



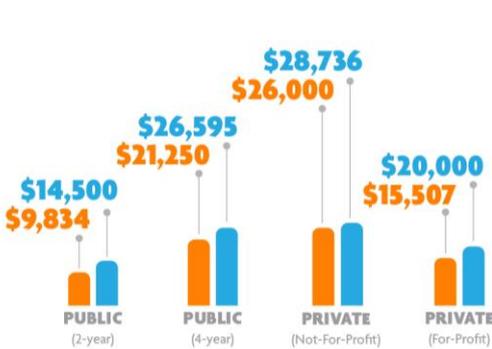
3. What will happen to borrowing if millions of students don't travel to college towns and campuses?

Does Knowing About Income-Driven Repayment Change How Much College Students Borrow?

Median cumulative borrowing for students who reported completing their degree in 2015-16

- **AWARE of IDR while enrolled**
- **NOT aware of IDR while enrolled**

UNDERGRADUATE



GRADUATE



4. The price reductions students want for this fall's remote-learning aren't about remote-learning

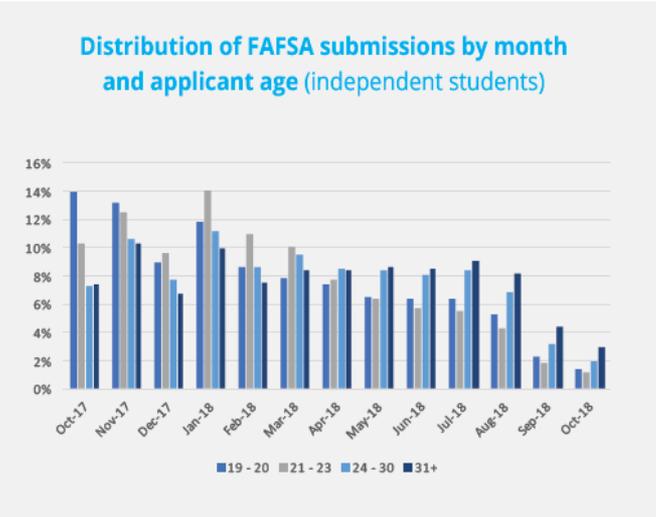
- The challenges with remote learning consumers mention exist in lots of college courses that are held in-person
 - Many introductory and core courses are taught in large lecture halls where education is mostly asynchronous anyway
 - Community college to 4-year transfer model shows that at least part of the pricing in more selective, elite institutions is due to the purchase of “access rights” to non-education benefits

4. The price reductions students want for this fall's remote-learning aren't about remote-learning

- Example: “lecture-heavy” classes requiring class space & faculty time
 - Washtenaw Community College charges \$95/credit hour for Econ 211: Principles of Economics I
 - The University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) charges \$507/credit hour* for Econ 102: Principles of Economics II
 - U-Mich accepts Econ 211 credits from WCC
- A student would only really be willing to pay 5x more for what is optically the exact same product if there is some hidden value not captured in the education itself.

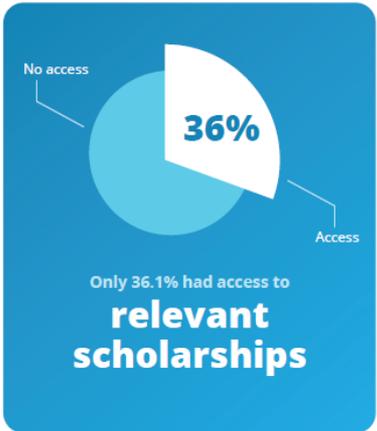
5. Did COVID-19 affect the opportunities for students to secure state grants and third-party scholarships?

The pandemic hit right at the time students would be applying for non-federal aid and we know certain students already risk losing out on that aid to begin with.



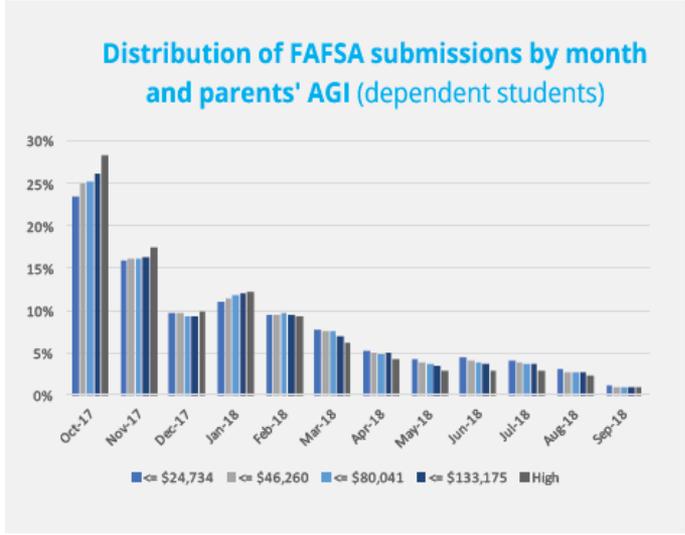
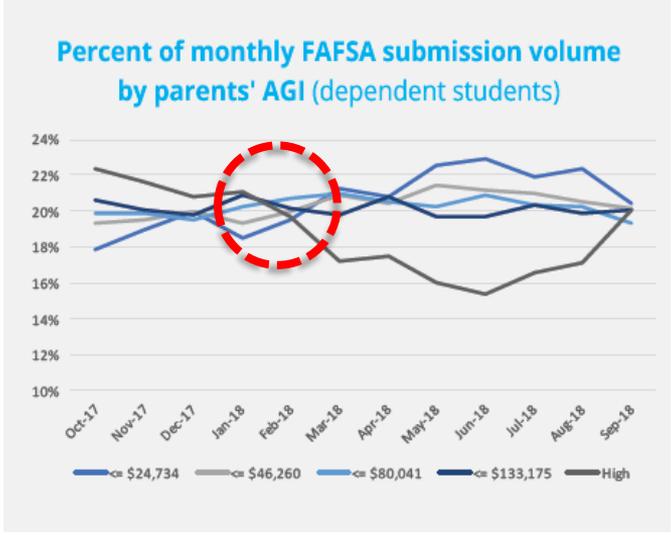
Only about one-third of college alumni indicated they had access to timely information about relevant scholarships, both at their institution and outside their institution.

36.1% of alumni indicated they had access to timely information about relevant scholarships at the institution they qualified for, and only 33.3% for relevant scholarships outside the institution.



5. Did COVID-19 affect the opportunities for students to secure state grants and third-party scholarships?

The pandemic hit right at the time students would be applying for non-federal aid and we know certain students already risk losing out on that aid to begin with.



(6. Why is nobody talking about deferring institutions debt payments instead of providing federal stimulus?)

When the pandemic hit, the very first relief packages for consumers weren't injections of funding. They were negotiated pauses on debt payments.

Most institutions agree that support from the CARES Act and any other federal stimulus are likely to still fall well short of what institutions believe the need in order to weather the fiscal crisis that has been created as a result